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SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SUSAN MCCLURG, CHAIR OF THE ACABQ

¶1. SUMMARY: Ambassador Rice met March 9 with Susan McClurg (Amcit), Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), to discuss the overall work of the Committee and its role in considering administrative and budgetary proposals of the UN as well as advising the General Assembly. McClurg outlined items the ACABQ is currently considering, such as the logistic support package for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and other matters it will consider in the coming months. In addition, she gave her perspective on the dynamics and positions within the Committee. McClurg also shared her views on how U.S. engagement in budget matters within the United Nations, specifically within the Fifth Committee, is perceived by other Member States. END SUMMARY.

¶2. Susan McClurg opened the meeting by explaining the role of the ACABQ and its responsibilities in reviewing administrative and budgetary proposals as well as audit reports and providing recommendations to the General Assembly. McClurg stated the goal of the ACABQ is to provide recommendations that can serve as a basis for a consensus agreement.

¶3. McClurg gave her outlook on how the logistical support package for AMISOM would play out in the ACABQ. She indicated that the Secretary General's initial request to grant the Secretariat commitment authority of \$50 million to jump-start the mission would be recommended for approval by the ACABQ. However, McClurg indicated that the second request to approve the complete budget through June or August would be a tough sell, but in the end, she believes the Committee will recommend approval. She deferred on how the issue would play out in the 5th Committee. McClurg confirmed that the equipment used for UNMEE will be used by AMISOM and is in the process of being shipped or has already been shipped.

¶4. McClurg then shared her views on other items the Committee is considering or will be considering such as peacekeeping missions (UNMIS, UNAMID, MINUCRCAT, UNFICYP, UNIFIL, UNDOF, etc); the peacekeeping support account; status report on the restructuring of DPKO/DFS; further requests for IT upgrades; additional resources for security improvements and the 2010-2011 regular budget to be considered in the Fall;. McClurg mentioned that the Secretary General had instructed program managers and department heads to reduce their budgets by 2% when preparing the 2010-2011 budget.

¶5. Regarding U.S. engagement on budget matters within the United Nations, McClurg expressed concern over what she sees as a lack of leadership by the U.S. in the Fifth Committee on budget matters as well as concern with the style in which the U.S. has engaged in the past. She stated that other Member States look to the U.S. for leadership on many issues and believes it hurts the U.S. when we don't engage early on in the issues. She also cited our regular budget and peacekeeping budget arrears as another area where the U.S. continually takes hits from other Member States. McClurg encouraged the Mission at the highest levels to lay out the U.S. position on the regular budget and peacekeeping budget, including the arrearage issue, at the earliest opportunity.
Wolff